

Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (AHPS)

Request For Comments

Government Responses

1. Question/Comment

“Evaluation Factors – I think generally that these are clear and easily understood. The only thing that caused me to pause was the statement in M.5.1 that the Government would evaluate “the offeror’s understanding of the seen and unseen scope of work and requirements...” Understanding the unseen scope of work could be problematic.”

Government Response:

The Government will evaluate the presented depth and breadth of the offeror’s understanding of hydrology and hydrological prediction capabilities that AHPS has or should possess. The Government does not intend that offerors should demonstrate an understanding of every conceivable task that would be issued under this contract. Rather, the Government desires that each offeror demonstrate a clear and complete enough understanding of the anticipated work to eliminate the risk of selecting them.

2. Question/Comment

“It is noted in C.4.1 and C.4.2 that work will be performed at both the Government and contractor sites with specifics to be “specified by the requirements of each specific task order”. Can you identify the location of the Government facilities and can you characterize about how many people the contractor should anticipate providing facilities for?”

Government Response:

The work location will be specified in each task order. The RFP will reflect a change that requires pricing for task orders only and not on the overall contract. The amount of work and, therefore, workforce characterization and location is not totally known and dependent on budget availability. Work locations could be at the NWS Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, the NWS National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), any of the 13 NWS River Forecast Centers (RFC), and/or any of the 122 NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFO) located throughout the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Work on a specific task order also could require temporary duty to an international location anywhere in the world.

3. **Question/Comment**

"I would like to receive a copy of the firms/contacts on the external distribution list for this draft RFP."

Government Response:

The bidder's list was released on 11/20/2002.

4. **Question/Comment**

"The draft RFP specifies that contractor personnel could be working at a Government facility or the contractor's site. Most contractors maintain different labor rates for these two locations. However, Section B requests only one labor rate. Please clarify Section B so that all contractors bid the same, appropriate rate."

Government Response:

The Draft RFP did specify a requirement for rates at both Government and contractor location. However, the RFP, when released, will require pricing on task orders only. See the answer to # 2 above.

5. **Question/Comment**

"In Section B it states that "offerors are encouraged to pursue sub-contracting with small, small disadvantaged, women-owned and HubZone businesses" How are small and small disadvantaged businesses defined?"

Government Response:

For this procurement, a small business is defined as a business with an average of under \$6M average revenue during the past 3 fiscal years. The NAICS code is 541990. A small disadvantaged business is a business that qualifies as a United States Small Business Administration Section 8(a) firm and/or a firm that has been so designated by any agency of the Federal Government.

6. **Question/Comment**

"In the paragraphs describing the content of Section D, bidders are requested to supply resumes of Key Personnel. However, we could not find a definition of Key Personnel anywhere in the document. Please add this definition to the final RFP."

Government Response:

The RFP will not require any specific labor categories or key person requirements except the person who will function as the Program Manager for the contractor. During the life of the contract, key person clauses may, at the option of the Government be specified on an individual task order. The Government foresees that this will be a rare occurrence and will be negotiated at that time.

7. **Question/Comment**

"In Section L.5, Section D Bullet #2 describes the requirements for resumes and letters of commitment. Are resumes and letters included in the page count?"

Government Response:

Resumes and letters of intent may be required for individual task orders. The only resume that is now required with the contract proposal will be the resume of the person who will function as the Program Manager. That resume is limited to 2 pages and will be excluded from the proposal page limit. The offeror will have to submit a 3 page writing sample authored by the person proposed to function as the Program Manager. The writing sample also will not be considered in the page limitation.

8. **Question/Comment**

"There currently exists no information about the use of 11" x 17" foldouts. Will such foldouts be permitted for graphics and/or Illustrations only and do they count as one or two pages?"

Government Response:

11" x 17" foldouts are not permitted.

9. **Question/Comment**

"The third paragraph states "Offerors are not allowed to separately price the required Program Manager. The Program Manager's costs are required to be included in the overhead calculation." And yet Program Manager is listed as a labor category in Section B. This appears contradictory. Please explain how to price the required Program Manager."

Government Response:

The Government is not using a T&M contract with fixed labor rates.

10. **Question/Comment**

"We believe that clear understanding and knowledge of NWS operations and objectives are important for communications and successful project completion. Therefore, [we] suggest that the evaluation for award percentage for Understanding and Overall Capabilities should comprise greater than five percent of the total score."

Government Response:

It is important to have a "demonstrated" understanding of NWS operations and objectives which can be achieved a numbers of ways. The presented percentages demonstrate the Government's commitment to competition on this contract.

11. Question/Comment

"The RFP seems to indicate that the selected team will need to have full staff in place shortly after selection and continuing through the five year period. Is this correct? If not, what will the staff ramp-up period be?"

Government Response:

The RFP has changed to require staffing only on individual task orders. Staff duration is to be defined by the contractor and agreed to be the Government on individual task orders. The ramp-up period also will be defined by the contractor and agreed to by the Government on individual task orders.

12. Question/Comment

"How will the transition from the existing contractor(s) to the new contractor(s) (presuming this is the case) be handled under this scope of work?"

Government Response:

This is not the case. Existing contractors will be allowed to complete their tasks. The Government envisions new tasking to be under the new contract. The Government will evaluate the offeror's proposed plan to obtain the necessary knowledge and experience to perform under this contract.

13. Question/Comment

"Please provide additional explanation of how the SBE/MBE goals are to be implemented in this scope of work, specifically, whether the goals must be met in all years independently, or if there are minimum participation levels below the desired goals."

Government Response:

A subcontract plan must be accepted by contract award. It is up to the contractor how to implement small business goals. Goals are to be met during the life of the contract.

14. Question/Comment

"My only comment is that perhaps relaxing the length of experience criteria in RFP would increase the likelihood of an infusion of innovation and new methods. Requirements for 15 years should be reduced to 10 years and 10 years should be reduced to 5 years."

Government Response:

The RFP has been changed to a performance-based RFP and all labor categories have been eliminated.

15. Question/Comment

"Would it be possible for NOAA to provide me with a list of firms that have downloaded the said draft RFP?"

Government Response:

A bidder's list of known potential bidder's was distributed on 11/20/2002.

16. Question/Comment

"Under what kind of contract it will use, will it use GSA?"

Government Response:

The AHPS requirement will be awarded as a Department of Commerce/ NOAA Contract.

17. Question/Comment

"Has the pre-proposal conference been done?"

Government Response:

The pre-proposal "Industry Day" conference is scheduled to be held on December 12, 2002. 1325 East West Highway, Bldg SSMC-2, Room 15246, 9 am to 12 noon.

18. Question/Comment

"Can you direct me to or provide me with a list of comments and comment authors?"

Government Response:

The Government will not publish comments that were submitted or identify the author of either comments or questions. The Government did publish a bidder's list via email message. The Government also extracted questions from the submitted comments and is publishing these responses to those questions.

19. Question/Comment

"The Introduction states that a pre-proposal conference is planned for this procurement. However, no there was schedule information provided. Please provide the estimated or planned dates for RFP release, Pre-proposal Conference, Proposal Due Date, and Award Date."

Government Response:

Please check the AHPS website to obtain the latest schedule that the Government is willing to publish. Please see the answer to # 17 above.

20. Question/Comment

“Section B.2. The tables in Section B.2 request “fixed (fully loaded) Hourly rate” for a variety of labor categories. Section C.2.3 states that work may be performed at the Contractor’s site and/or at a Government facility as specified by the requirements of each task order. Does Section B.2 request on-site (at a Government facility) rates or off-site (Contractor site) or both.”

Government Response:

The draft RFC requested both. However, the RFP will be changed to require pricing on task orders only. Individual task orders will specify Contractor and/or Government work location.

21. Question/Comment

“Section L.4 specifies written proposals. Suggest the Government consider an oral proposal presented by the key personnel.”

Government Response:

The Government is considering the use of oral proposals.

22. Question/Comment

“Could you provide us with a status on approximately when the RFP may be coming out. We have heard everything from this week to mid January. Also, if it is delayed, will you still accept questions on the draft.”

Government Response:

Please monitor the AHPS website to keep track of the planned dates for the AHPS Procurement. The Government will continue to accept comments but may not respond to those questions until the pre-proposal conference. The Government cautions potential offerors that questions on pricing and labor categories may not be applicable due to the RFP change to make the solicitation a performance-based solicitation.

23. Question/Comment

Many comments were received on suggestions for performance measures.

Government Response:

Most of the comments may be applicable on individual task orders. All will be considered for use during the execution of the resulting contract. Performance measures will be negotiated on a task order basis.

24. Question/Comment

At least one set of responses indicate that the commenting organization views this contract as a software development contract.

Government Response:

The Government wishes to reiterate that the AHPS contract is a science contract that includes elements of software development and engineering.

25. Question/Comment

"The RFP refers to the fact that the Government is encouraging teaming on this project. It would be helpful to prospective bidders to understand NWS' position on joint ventures. In other words, are you encouraging, discouraging, or neutral to JVs.

Government Response:

Sometimes companies need to team to have the assets to bid on a particular requirement. The Government does encourage competition. There is no evaluation factor based upon teaming.

26. Question/Comment

"Completion of the Other Direct Costs and Travel portions of the rate table would be very difficult given the available information. It may be better to provide units in both categories so that the Government can make an "apples to apples" comparison of the proposals" and the rest of the Section B comments.

Government Response:

Section B is being changed to require offerors to present prices on specific task orders.

27. Question/Comment

Are there specific labor categories.

Government Response:

Offerors will be free to propose any Labor Category they feel necessary to accomplish a task order in the proposal for that task order.